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SECT 01 OF 22013

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TRANSIT/211645Z/211909Z/002:24TOR08019Ø7
DE RUESBAA #0203 0801725
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P 211645Z MAR 77
FM (b)(3):10 USC 424
TO RUEKJCS/DIA WASH DC
INFO RULPALJ/USCINCSO WASH DC
RULPHWD/24TH COMPW HOWARD AFB/IN
RUEFHQA/HQUSAF WASH DC/XOXXW
BT
~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~/NOFORN MAR 77 SECTION 1 OF 2
SUBJ: THIS IS IR (b)(3):10 USC 424
1. ARGENTINE (AR)
2. (b)(3):10 USC 424
3. (U) POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL - ARGENTINE AIR FORCE
REACTION TO FMS CREDIT REDUCTION
4. N/A
5. 770311
6. 770315
7. 770311, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
8. (b)(3):10 USC 424
9.
10.
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12.

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13. (b)(3):10 USC 424

14.

15.

16. SUMMARY 1. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ARGENTINE AIR FORCE (ARGAF) REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL THAT FMS CREDIT FOR ARGENTINA BE REDUCED BECAUSE OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN GUARDED, WITH AN UNDERLYING STRATEGY OF CONTAINING THE DAMAGE DONE TO THAT SPECIFIC AREA OF US-ARGENTINA RELATIONS. THERE WAS A GENERAL MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT FMS CREDITS ARE, AND A QUICK STUDY WAS MADE OF THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF SALES, TRANSFERS OF EQUIPMENT, AND TRAINING IN THE US. SOME RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PUT ON AIR FORCE (AFSEC) (USMILGP) TRAVELS FOR UNIT VISITS, BUT ARGAF-USAF PERSONAL RELATIONS REMAIN EXCELLENT.

2. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ MANY IN THE ARGAF DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSED REDUCTION AND WERE ANGRY THAT ARGENTINE INTERNAL MATTERS SHOULD BE THE RATIONALS FOR A REDUCTION IN FMS CREDITS. ALL SOURCES AGREED THAT CREDIT LEVELS ARE AN INTERNAL USG DETERMINATION, BUT THEY WERE ANGRY AND HURT WHEN HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA, AN ARGENTINE INTERNAL MATTER, WERE USED AS THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE CREDITS. SOURCE A, Sec. 3.3(b) (1) SAID THAT INITIAL REACTION WAS VERY STRONG AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSES TENDED TOWARD REMOVAL OF THE USMILGP, REJECTING ALL UNUSED AND FUTURE CREDITS, AND RECALLING THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. IN THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH LED TO THE FINAL POLICY DECISION, TEMPERS COOLED AND MODERATE CONCEPTS PREVAILED. THE GOA DECISION, IN WHICH ALL THREE SERVICES CONCURRED, WAS TO LIMIT THE DAMGE TO THIS ONE AREA, AND NOT TO JEOPARDIZE PAST OR FUTURE CREDITS BY OVERREACTING. SOURCE A ALSO SAID THAT EACH OF THE SERVICES WAS ACTIVELY STUDYING THE IMPACT OF FURTHER CUTS, AND THE FEASIBILITY OF GOING TO OTHER SOURCES FOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS. SOURCE C, Sec. 3.3(b) (1) SAID THAT GOA FEELS THE DECISION BY THE USG TO ASK FOR FEWER CREDITS FOR ARGENTINA WAS BASED ON A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE TRUE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. HE SAID GOA WOULD BE TAKING ACTION TO CORRECT THIS.

3. (U) SOURCE B INDICATED THAT THERE ARE MANY OFFICERS IN THE ARGAF WHO DO NOT KNOW THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF FMS CREDITS, COMMERCIAL SALES, OR THE IMET PROGRAM. IN DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS WITH SOURCE A, B AND E, FOUND A LACK OF UNDER-

Sec. 3.3(b) (1)

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STANDING CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF CONGRESSIONAL DETERMINATION OF FMS CREDITS AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT CONGRESS COULD TAKE ACTION TO LIMIT UTILIZATION OF CREDITS ALREADY AUTHORIZED, BUT NOT YET USED, APPARENTLY, MANY ARGAF OFFICERS FEEL THAT THE SECSTATE PROPOSAL IS THE LAST THEY WILL HEAR OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FMS CREDITS UNTIL THE FY79 PROPOSAL IS TO BE MADE. SOURCE D SAYS HIS CONTACTS, WHO WORK IN THE ARGAF AGENCIES WHICH DEAL WITH CREDITS AND PURCHASES, ARE WELL AWARE OF THE TECHNICAL NUANCES OF FMS, BUT PERHAPS NOT AWARE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION YET TO COME.

4. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ IN SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS [redacted] SOURCE A, SOURCE E [redacted] Sec. 3.3(b) (1) AND SOURCE F [redacted] Sec. 3.3(b) (1) ALL EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE USG ACTION HAD SERIOUSLY WEAKENED THE POSITION OF GOA MODERATES VIS A VIS THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. ALL THREE STATED THAT THOSE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT IN FAVOR OR PRODUCING A COMPLETE LIST OF DETAINEES AND PUNISHING PERSONNEL KNOWN TO HAVE COMMITTED EXCESSES, ARE NOW UNABLE TO SUPPORT THEIR VIEWS WITHOUT BEING LABELED DISLOYAL TO THEIR COUNTRY. ALL THREE SOURCES USED THE EXAMPLE OF US AMBASSADOR BRADEN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST JUAN PERON IN THE 1946 ELECTION TO EXPLAIN THE CURRENT REACTION TO THE US HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES. THEY SAID THAT JUST AS VOTERS WERE CONVINCED TO VOTE FOR PERON AS A REACTION TO US INTERFERENCE THEN, MODERATES NOW FEEL PRESSURES TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY'S HONOR RATHER THAN SUPPORT US HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. SOURCE E AND F SAID THEY THOUGHT THIS NATIONALIST REACTION COULD BE REDUCED WITH TIME IF THE USG

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TRANSIT/211645Z/211909Z/002:24TOR0801859
DE RUESBAA #0203 0801725
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P 211645Z MAR 77
FM USDAO BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEKJCS/DIA WASH DC
INFO RULPALJ/USCINCSO WASH DC
RULPHWD/24TH COMPW HOWARD AFB/IN
RUEFHQA/HQUSAF WASH DC/XOXXW
BT
~~C O N F I D E N T I A L/NOFORN~~ MAR 77 SECTION 2 OF 2
DOESN'T MAKE ADDITIONAL CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN
ARGENTINA, IF USG DOES MAKE FURTHER CHARGES, THEY FEAR
AN INCREASED HARDENING ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, AND
EXACERBATING OF GOA-USG RELATIONS WHICH MODERATES WILL NOT
BE ABLE TO CONFINE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. SOURCES A
& E STATED THAT IN THEIR JUDGEMENT THE LOSS OF LEVERAGE
FOR MODERATES IN THE GOA HAS SPILLED OVER INTO ALL PHASES
OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS. ALL THREE OF
THESE SOURCES NOTED THAT BY CUTTING BACK THE PROPOSED
FMS CREDITS, AND INCITING THE GOA REACTION OF REJECTING ALL
FMS CREDITS FOR FY78, THE USG HAD LOST A GREAT DEAL OF ITS
LEVERAGE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE. IN ADDITION TO
REDUCING THE POWER OF MODERATES WITHIN THE GOA, THE USG HAD
FORFEITED A MAJOR VEHICLE FOR EXERTING PRESSURE THROUGH THE

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ARGENTINE MILITARY. THESE SOURCES SEE DIMINISHED MODERATE INFLUENCE IN GOA AS THE MOST IMPORTANT LONG RANGE RESULT OF THE FMS CREDIT REDUCTIONS.

5. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ SOURCES A, B AND C EMPHASIZED THAT THE ARGENTINE MILITARY IN GENERAL, AND THE ARGAF IN PARTICULAR, WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WHICH EXIST WITH THEIR SISTER-SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES. SOURCE A STATED THAT THE AFSEC IS IMPORTANT TO ARGAF FOR PROFESSIONAL AND DOCTRINAL REASONS. HE SAID THE AFSEC WOULD REMAIN IN ARGENTINA AS LONG AS THE INTERNAL POLITICAL REACTIONS TO USG "INTERVENTION IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS" WOULD PERMIT. HE ADDED THAT ARGAF-USAF RELATIONS WOULD BE ISOLATED FROM GOA-USG CONFLICTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, SUGGESTING THAT EVEN IN THE MOST EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ARGAF WOULD TRY IN SOME WAY TO KEEP THE AFSEC IN PLACE, BASED ON THE EXISTING BILATERAL TREATY. SOURCE D REPORTED ON 10 MAR 77, HOWEVER, THAT A PROPOSED UNIT VISIT TO AFSEC PERSONNEL WOULD HAVE TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER BRIG AGOSTI, CINC ARGAF, HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH GEN MCBRIDE, VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, USAF ON BILATERAL ISSUES DURING THE 17TH INTER AMERICAN AIR FORCE CHIEFS' CONFERENCE (13-19 MAR 1977) - PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY). DAO AND AFSEC PERSONNEL REPORT NO CHANGES IN THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH ARGAF COUNTERPARTS.

COMMENT: ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ARGENTINE NATIONAL PRIDE HAS BEEN HURT, ON TWO COUNTS: A) ALLEGED USG INTERFERENCE IN A DOMESTIC ISSUE AND B) COMPARING ARGENTINA WITH ETHIOPIA, SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES. THE COMPARISON WITH ETHIOPIA IS OFFENSIVE TO MANY ARGENTINES BECAUSE ARGENTINA CONSIDERS ITSELF ALMOST A DEVELOPED NATION, WHILE IT CONSIDERS ETHIOPIA AS A PART OF TRIBAL, BACKWARD AFRICA. THE COMPARISION WITH SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES HURTS THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL PRIDE BECAUSE IT IS A GRAPHIC DEMONSTRATION TO GOA OF THEIR LESSOR RELATIVE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE USG. COMPARED TO THE REACTION OF URUGUAY AND BRAZIL TO FMS REDUCTIONS, THE GOA REACTION HAS BEEN MODERATE AND CAREFULLY ARTICULATED TO CONFINE THE ISSUE. THE STRONG INITIAL INTERNAL REACTION, AND THE LOSS OF LEVERAGE FOR MODERATES IN THE GOA, COULD MEAN A HARDENING OF POSITIONS WITHIN THE GOA ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, AS WELL AS A MORE EMOTIONAL REACTION TO FURTHER USG ACTIONS WHICH LINK HUMAN RIGHTS TO US-ARGENTINE BILATERAL RELATIONS. THIS MSG HAS BEEN COORDW/EMBASSY

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